**Tokyo-led Asian broad band programme**

*265. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Japan have signed an MoU for participation of India in the Tokyo-led Asian Broad Band Programme; and

(b) if so, the details of the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

However, on 18th January, 2005, a Joint Statement was signed by the Minister of Communications and Information Technology of India and the Minister for Internal Affairs & Communications of Japan in Tokyo, Japan during the visit of Hon'ble Minister of Communications and Information Technology to Japan.

In the Joint Statement, the two Ministers confirmed that Information Communication Technology (ICT) is a major driving force in promoting sustainable economic & social development, improving quality of life, helping people achieve their full potential and maintaining cultural diversities.

The two Ministers affirmed that Asia Broad Band Programme, inter-aiia, can make a significant contribution to the development of information society in both countries as well as in the Asia-Pacific region as **a** whole. The two Ministers further confirmed the necessity to strengthen cooperation between Japan and India in the field of ICT including encouraging the use of affordable technologies for broadband network.

**Water harvesting**

*266. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that it is proposed to make water harvesting a part of MPLADS to control water crisis in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the action plan; and

(c) how far this would help to address this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) Water harvesting works are permissible under the MPLADS Scheme.

(b) and (c) Water harvesting including rain water harvesting will help in augmenting the surface water and raising the ground water level thereby enhancing the availability of water for use. As and when Member of Parliament recommends rain water harvesting works in a particular area, the district authority concerned examines and sanctions the same, if found feasible and permissible under the MPLADS Scheme.

**Upgradation of Telephone Exchanges in Mizoram**

*267. SHRI LALHMING LIANA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Telephone Exchanges with their capacity in the State of Mizoram and the exchanges which are earmarked for upgradation during the current financial year;

(b) whether BSNL is contemplating to cover the whole State of Mizoram with WLL during the financial year 2005-06; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) There are 69 Telephone Exchanges with the capaicty of 71892 lines in the Mizoram State. The exchanges in Statement-I (See below) are earmarked for upgradation during the current financial year.

(b) and (c) BSNL is contemplating WLL coverage almost in the whole State of Mizoram during 2005-06. At present there are 7 Nos of BTSs, each of 500 lines capacity (Total 3500 lines) as per details given in the Statement-ll *(See* below) and there is a plan of add 23 more BTSs with the total capacity of 17250 during the current financial year 2005-06 as per details mentioned in the Statement-Ill.